THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) The target originally fixed for new lines for the 9th plan was 819 Km.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Constraint of resources has been the major cause. Delay in land acquisition and law and order problems etc. have also contributed to the shortfall.

(d) Approximately Rs. 1867.03 crore has so far been spent during 9th Plan upto Feb. 2001.

Transfer of Technology for Golden Rice

3933. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Swiss scientists have offered 'Golden Rice' to India;

(b) if so, the details of the 'Golden Rice'; and

(c) by when the transfer of technology is going to take place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A proposal for Joint Research on Golden Rice under the second phase of Indo-Swiss Collaboration in Biotechnology is under consideration. The Indian Institutions such as Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi; University of Delhi South Campus, New Delhi; Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore; and Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad will be associated with the proposed research activity with in the framework of National Biosafety Guidelines. The Department of Biotechnology and Indian Council for Agricultural Research are jointly working towards finalisation of the proposal. The results leading to Pro-

vitamin-A rich Indian rice varieties to be used by resource poor farmers are expected within 5-6 years.

Coconut Oil as Petrol and Diesel Substitute

3934. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether coconut oil offers cheap substitute to petrol and diesel, as found out by a Thai farmer;

(b) whether Government would tap its potential and undertake research to help in boosting the rural economy; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAW AT): (a) to (c) The techno-economic feasibility and viability of using coconut oil as a petrol/diesel substitute is yet to be established. Various institutions are already involved in conducting research on agro substitutes for fossil fuels and this includes coconut oil among other oils.

Measures to Combat Earthquakes

† 3935. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the news item published in Hindustan dated 18th February, 2001 under the caption "Desh Ka Koi bhoobhag bhukamp se surakshit nahi";

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard; and

(c) the details of the effective and immediate measures taken by Government to settle the problems highlighted in the said news-item?

† Original notice of the question received in Hindi.